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ABSTRACT

This book considers how children form connections with the natural world, and questions what may happen to children denied exposure to wild places--a reality for many children today. Two men draw on memories of their own childhoods and on their experiences as naturalists and as fathers to tell stories of children learning about wild places and wildlife in settings that include empty city lots, suburban backyards, the Indiana Dunes, isolated Nevada sheep ranches, Native American communities in the Southwest, and rural Mexico. Eight essays discuss the ways that young children investigate and play in an outdoor place and thereby, make the place their own; children's development of competence and self-esteem through experiences in the natural world; rites of passage and how one young naturalist found his calling; differences in the ways that men and women relate to the land, and cultural restraints on women's outdoor behaviors and careers; environmental education through traditional family story telling versus television viewing; growing up on isolated Western ranches and the environmental attitudes of Westerners; fear of reptiles and developing an appreciation for all wildlife; and camping and hiking with dogs and children. Contains references in end notes. (SV)

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